

## MINING LAWS RELATING TO ALASKA.

JANUARY 3, 1901.—Referred to the Committee on Territories and ordered to be printed.

Mr. THURSTON presented the following

**PETITION FROM L. W. GILCHRIST, OF SEATTLE, WASH., PRAYING FOR CERTAIN CHANGES IN THE MINING LAWS RELATING TO ALASKA.**

### THE MINING LAWS OF ALASKA.

There seems to be a general impression among mining men that the laws governing the location and working of mines, especially in Alaska, should be amended. The mining people of Nome have elected a committee to go to Washington to look after legislation, and Governor Brady calls attention to the fact that a change in our mining laws should be made. The laws that govern the location of placer mines now were enacted in 1872, and under that law one person could stake and hold 20 acres of placer mining ground and after spending a certain amount in developing the same could make proof and get a patent for the same. That law was passed twenty-five years after gold was discovered in California.

In 1872 the rich placers had been worked out, and there was little chance to make mining pay except by hydraulicking. The cost of a hydraulic plant was too great for a small amount of ground. Of all that has been written and published, neither the Nome committee nor Governor Brady has made any suggestion of changes that are needed. At the risk of being egotistical, I will make a few suggestions which I hope to see embodied in laws passed by this Congress. I will say that I have spent many years in placer mining, and that I was in Nome this last summer and had a good chance to become familiar with the miserable condition that prevailed and choked the life out of the development of northwest Alaska. There were several things that prevented the opening of thousands of claims:

First. The location, staking, and recording placer-mining claims by power of attorney.

Second. The area of claims as now allowed under the law of 1872.

Third. The United States laws allowing from nearly two years to one for working assessments.

Fourth. The judicial cussedness of the United States court, that landed in Nome July 19, this season.

Locating claims by power of attorney was industriously worked from the time gold was first discovered. There were scores of men in Nome that had from 6 to 80 claims in charge, and they were working all the season to get some tenderfoot to go out and work them on a lay—share of the gold taken out—thereby getting their assessment work done for nothing. This location power-of-attorney fraud caused thousands of good miners to leave Alaska this season. The remedy I would suggest in this case is that Congress pass a law declaring every claim located by power of attorney null and void and subject to relocation, and that neither the person used to locate a mining claim by power of attorney nor the acting attorney be allowed to relocate any part of any claim so located by power of attorney in any mining district in Alaska.

#### SIZE OF CLAIMS.

Reduce the present area of claims, which is 1,320 feet by 660—or 20 acres—to 400 feet, following the channel of river, creek, gulch, and ravine, by 300 feet in width. Bench and hill claims, 400 by 400 feet.

Lode or lead claims I would leave as now fixed by law—1,500 feet long by 600 feet in width.

#### ASSESSMENT.

Require all locators of claims to expend \$100 on every claim located and recorded, within one year from date of record thereof; and if any locator fails to work his assessment before the one year expires the claim shall be subject to relocation, and shall not be relocated by the party who failed to work his assessment.

An act to amend sections 2324 and 2325 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, concerning mineral lands, approved January 22, 1880 (21 Stat., p. 61), be, and the same is hereby, repealed.

The fourth item, the judicial court of the second district court of Alaska, I will take up in another article.

L. W. GILCHRIST.

SEATTLE, WASH., *November 24, 1900.*